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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT Thursday, November 9, 1939.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "THESE LITTLE TENANTS STAYED HOME." Information from the Extension Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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In contrast to the migratory farm families I have told you about from time to time, today I'm bringing you a happier report about some tenant farmers in South Carolina who were able to stay right at home. You remember that the migrant families in many cases were tenants who could not make a satisfactory living where they were, because of drought, dust, or poor soil, or because the landlord had bought tractors and no longer needed so many tenants.

Reports show how the Extension Service in South Carolina has undertaken the problem of helping small tenant farmers stay where they are. As part of the State 'Live-at-home' program the extension people called some of the large plantation owners together about 5 years ago, and said to them, in effect;

"Can't you let your tenants have enough ground to grow a food garden and feed for a cow, a few pigs, and some poultry? Then they would have a better diet, you wouldn't have so much sickness on the plantation, and the tenant families would be more likely to make a success of their farms, less likely to move every year."

Some of the plantation owners said, "Why, we've always done that-given the tenants a garden plot and encouraged them to raise their own foodstuffs. Our grandfathers used to ride around on horseback inspecting the tenants' gardens and chickens." Others admitted that the tenants usually had to plant cotton or tobacco on every available acre of ground, right up to the door, and that as a result, many had become accustomed to a very poor diet, because too often it had to be "store bought" - out of a low cash income --

So the "plantation project", as it was called, was adopted in several South Carolina counties,- Anderson, Marlboro, Dillon, Beaufort, and Allendale. Let's see how the plan worked in Anderson County.

Five of the larger landlord farmers agreed to cooperate with the State marketing specialist, the nutrition specialist, and the farm and home agents. These plantation owners rented to about 40 tenant farmers altogether, some white, and some negro. They helped work out a garden plan for their tenants, also a plan for growing stock feed. Thirty-two tenants cooperated the first year. Last year there were 39.

In the five years which have passed since the plan was started, the small farmers have realized how greatly they have benefited. A few months ago a check-up visit was made to 31 tenant homes. Fifteen of these families were getting an excellent milk supply- about 2 gallons daily. Four others were getting the full amount called for in a good diet plan. On one of the largest plantations, most of the families reported eating eggs daily, and unusually good gardens were found at all the homes except two. One of these was a new family, just moved on the place.

Eleven families had a nice supply of strawberries and blackberries and peaches for canning. All showed much interest in poultry. Some have built new chicken houses, bought baby chicks, and are planting grain for chick feed.

Nutrition information on the value of tomatoes in the diet led to great interest in tomato planting. The men in many cases are as interested as the women and have asked to have more tomatoes canned this year. All these home-raised foods mean a great improvement in the diets, the health-- and standard of living of these families. Instead of spending most of their small cash incomes at the store for food, they are raising most of what they must eat, and using the cash for other much needed things. For example, one farmer has painted his house, two families have bought electric irons and one a radio. And less money has been needed to pay doctor

There is interest in exterior improvement, too. Some of the women have planted flower gardens and one man put out several water oak trees near his house. All the tenants except the new families have had good wheat crops.

Now for a look at another county. Reports from Marlboro County read much the same as those from Anderson. Some of the tenants have been on the same farms from 12 to 30 years, with married children also renting from the same landowner. One of these farm mothers canned 79 jars of fruit, 111 jars of vegetables, and 76 jars of meat for her family of five. She had learned to use what she called a "precious cooker." She had collards and turnips in her winter garden, 35 bushels of sweet-potatoes banked, a cow, chickens, and pigs.

If it seems to some of you that this supply represents only ordinary forethought for providing the family food, you must remember that in many places it has not been the custom for tenant farmers to have land for a garden

The plantation project is helping to develop a feeling of responsibility and pride. There's also the desire to stay on one farm and enjoy a better life there. The landlords have been wise enough to see this and help make the project a success.

I haven't time to tell you much about Dillon, Beaufort and Allendale Counties. But I'd like to mention that in Beaufort County the men are so much interested that they come to the home demonstration meetings both with, and instead of, their wives to learn how to can and what makes a good diet. And in Allendale county, where the majority now have good winter gardens and a fairly good supply of canned foods, there's an unique arrangement between tenants and landlords. The tenant pays his rent by giving the landowner a day's work for each acre farmed. That amounts to about 30 days a year. So in one way and another on the South Carolina plantations landlord tenant -- demonstrations are keeping hundreds of small tenant farmers at home, out of the ranks of the migratory workers.